network / nétwerk n. & v. a group of people who exchange information, contacts, and experience for professional or social purposes. The Oxford Dictionary

**Why Is Everyone Always Talking About Networking?**

Maybe you’re a natural. Networking comes easy to you as you meet new people, share ideas, and collaborate with others. Or maybe the thought of networking makes you want to hide under your desk until the time passes. Whatever your preference networking is a very important step in navigating the job market and developing your professional skills. According to quintcareers.com, only 20% of open job positions are actually posted publically. The saying “It’s all about who you know” could not be more true. But networking doesn’t have to always be about the job. Sometimes just finding a group of individuals with a shared interest is great for enhancing our personal lives too. As we continue the journey of advancing women knowing when and how to network and present yourself professionally is essential.

**Women in the Workplace**

Tips to improve in-person networking

*Excerpt from the Rochester Women’s Network. Written by Tina Smagala, leadership development consultant and regional director for RV Rhodes LLC*

While social networking is hot, networking with people at meetings, conferences and events will never go out of style. Thirteen years ago, I created a workshop, People Power, to teach sales and business professionals how to work a room and make profitable connections. Here are some tools that are still useful today:

- **Arrive:** Rehearse your self-introduction. Don’t sit down because it gives the impression that you aren’t approachable; keep your business cards in your pocket; and wear your name tag just below your right shoulder.

- **Approach:** Move toward people who are standing alone, talking to someone you know, or who are in the refreshments line.

- **Assert:** Greet people with a smile and a firm handshake, and deliver your self-introduction with enthusiasm. In 25 words or less, your self-introduction should answer three questions: who are you, what do you do and how do you help? How you help is why people do business with you and it is where you add your "wow" factor that makes you distinguishable. Tailor your introduction to the audience by using relevant terminology.

- **Attend:** Ask open-ended questions to engage the person in conversation such as, "What do you enjoy most about your work?" The more you learn about others, the more likely you can help them or someone they know.

- **Appreciate:** End the conversation on a positive note by shaking hands, exchanging business cards and expressing your appreciation such as, "I appreciate your interest and I’ll follow-up with an email to schedule a time for us to meet and discuss your situation further."

After the conversation, jot down a few notes about the person on the back of her business card to help you remember the key points of your profitable connection.
According to NACE’s 2009 Student Survey:

- 38.1 percent of students who had a job offer cited networking as being extremely useful, beating out the company website in general and other job posting sites.
- 70 percent of all respondents said networking was helpful.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- 70 percent of jobs are found through networking.